

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-15 ISO-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 EB-11 COME-00

INT-08 TRSE-00 AGR-20 OMB-01 SCEM-02 CIEP-02 STR-08

SIL-01 LAB-06 IGA-02 DRC-01 /231 W

----- 124631

R 021530Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1278

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 LAGOS 7962

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, PFOR, PINT, NI

SUBJECT: GOWON'S "STATE OF THE NATION" ADDRESS

SUMMARY: IN OCTOBER 1 "STATE OF THE NATION" ADDRESS, GOWON REITERATED FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES, PROMISED FAITHFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF NINE-POINT PROGRAM, AND ANNOUNCED SEVERAL NEW MEASURES RELATIONG TO DOMESTIC ECONOMY. SPEECH FAIRLY ROUTINE AND TREATED AS SUCH BY PRESS. END SUMMARY.

1. TO ACCOMPANIMENT OF PARADE AND FLY-PAST, GENERAL GOWON DELIVERED TRADIONAL "STATE OF THE NATION" ADDRESS OCTOBER 1 ON OCCASION THIRTEENTH ANNIVERSARY NIGERIAN INDEPENDENCE. AS IN PAST YEARS, SPEECH WAS MELANGE OF NEW AND OLD, STRESSING THEMES OF STABILITY AND
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PROGRESS, WITH THIS YEAR'S NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS ENTIRELY

IN AREA OF DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

2. FOREIGN POLICY REMARKS ESSENTIALLY CATALOGUE OF FMG PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS. GOWON PLACED "ELIMINATION OF COLONIALISM AND RACISM" AND "CONSOLIDATION OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE IN AFRICA" AT TOP OF NIGERIAN PRIORITY LIST, AND CITED OAU AS "FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT INSTRUMENT" FOR PURSUIT THESE OBJECTIVES. HE ALSO REFERRED BRIEFLY TO JOINT EFFORT WITH TOGO TO STIMULATE WAEC; NEGOTIATIONS WITH EEC; AND ATTENDANCE AT "VITAL" NAC AND "UNIQUE AND SUCCESSFUL" COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE. GOWON CLOSED WITH PLEDGE OF "CONTINUED SUPPORT IN ALL POSSIBLE WAYS" FOR LIBERATION EFFORTS AND RENEWED WELCOME TO INDEPENDENT GUINEA-BISSAU.

3. DOMESTIC ECONOMY TOOK LION'S SHARE OF ADDRESS, WITH THREE ITEMS GETTING PRINCIPAL ATTENTION: (A) GOWON ANNOUNCED DECISION APPLY CURRENT LAGOS PRICES UNIFORMLY THROUGHOUT COUNTRY TO "CONVENTIONAL PETROLEUM PRODUCTS" EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 15, WHICH WILL RESULT IN CONSIDERABLE PRICE CUT IN NORTHERN STATES (FMG WILL IN EFFECT SUBSIDIZE TRANSPORT COSTS BY FORGOING PORTION OF EXCISE TAXES); DECISION JUSTIFIED AS ESSENTIAL TO FACILITATE DIVERSIFICATION OF INDUSTRY AND TO EASE COSTS OF STATE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS; (B) GOWON PLEDGED ADDITIONAL 12 MILLION NAIRA (ABOUT \$18 MILLION) TO AFFECTED STATES FOR LONG-TERM PROGRAMS TO COMBAT DROUGHT AND PROMISED CREATION WITHIN NEXT TWO YEARS OF NATIONAL STRATEGIC GRAINS RESERVE INTENDED BOTH MEET EMERGENCY NEEDS AND STABILIZE PRICES; AND (C) GOWON ANNOUNCED ESTABLISHMENT OCTOBER 1 OF FEDERAL HOUSING AUTHORITY TO EXECUTE FMG HOUSING PROGRAM THROUGHOUT COUNTRY, THUS PLACING PROGRAM ON MORE PERMANENT BASIS WITH DECLARED AIM OF ENSURING "WITHIN ONE GENERATION DECENT HOUSING AT REASONABLE COST FOR EVERY CITIZEN."

4. GOWON ALSO LAID HEAVY EMPHASIS ON FMG DETERMINATION "TO IMPLEMENT FULLY ITS INDIGENIZATION PROGRAM AND IN DOING SO TO KEEP TO ITS TIME TABLE." NIGERIAN BANK FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, OPENING OCTOBER 2, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WILL HELP FINANCE THIS PROCESS, GOWON SAID, AND HE URGED NIGERIAN BUSINESSMEN NOT TO DELAY NEGOTIATIONS FOR TAKE-OVER OF EXPATRIATE FIRMS. IN COURSE HIS COMMENTS ON INDIGENIZATION, GOWON REPORTED THAT PARTICIPATION NEGOTIATIONS IN PROGRESS WITH EXISTING OIL COMPANIES "HAVE BEEN CONCLUDED SUCCESSFULLY" AND FMG "NOW HOLDS AT LEAST 35 PERCENT OF EQUITY SHARES IN EACH OF OIL COMPANIES OPERATING IN COUNTRY."

(COMMENT: DETAILS ON THIS ANNOUNCEMENT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS BEING REPORTED SEPTEL.)

5. ON POLITICAL SIDE, GOWON ASSURED LISTENERS THAT "FMG IS FAITHFULLY IMPLEMENTING ITS NINE-POINT POLITICAL PROGRAM" AND PROMISED "KEEP NATION FULLY INFORMED OF OUR PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF REMAINING POINTS." HE URGED NIGERIANS AVOID "ANYTHING LIKELY LEAD US TO DISSIPATE OUR ENERGIES IN ACRIMONIOUS POLITICAL WRANGLINGS" INSTEAD OF PURSUING DEVELOPMENT, AND PREDICTED PEACEFUL SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REVOLUTION ABOUT TO BEGIN.

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6. ONLY OTHER TOPICS TREATED WERE CENSUS, NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE CORPS, AND SPORTS, WITH REFERENCE TO LATTER TWO ESSENTIALLY CONGRATULATORY AND HORTATORY.

GOWON STRESSED THAT CENSUS IS "ESSENTIALLY A TECHNICAL EXERCISE AIMED AT ASSISTING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PLANNING" WITH POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE SECONDARY, AND REPORTED SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF PRELIMINARY STEPS TAKEN TO DATE.

7. COMMENT: "STATE OF NATION" CLEARLY HEALTHY, IN GOWON'S EYES, AND CONFIDENT ADDRESS REFLECTS THIS GENERAL MOOD. UPBEAT TONE LEFT NO ROOM FOR SUCH PERSISTENT PROBLEMS AS CORRUPTION, UNEMPLOYMENT OR RURAL UNDERDEVELOPMENT, BUT PRESS HAS BALANCED THESE AGAINST ACHIEVEMENTS CATALOGUED BY GOWON TO SUGGEST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE. PRESS RESERVE LIMITED TO DOMESTIC SCENE, HOWEVER, AND NEWSPAPERS FULLY SHARE GOWON'S SENSE OF PRIDE IN NIGERIA'S GROWING STATURE ON WORLD SCENE.

8. WITHIN NIGERIA, NORTH IS PRINCIPAL BENEFICIARY OF NEW MEASURES ANNOUNCED IN ADDRESS. UNIFORM PETROLEUM PRICES RESPOND TO LONGSTANDING NORTHERN DEMAND AND IN EFFECT REPRESENT ADDITIONAL FMG SUBSIDY TO NORTHERN STATES, WHICH ALSO GAIN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM NEW DROUGHT FUNDS.
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